



## PUBLIC EDUCATION PLAN

### Permanency Sustainability

#### Context

California has begun to make progress in the area of permanency during the past few years because of a shift in culture and practice in child welfare. A number of county child welfare agencies have implemented new policies and practices emphasizing the importance of permanency and have allocated resources to support the training and partnerships needed to begin new, effective practices. There is a growing recognition that all foster children and youth need and deserve lifelong connections with family and supportive adults. This is due to key initiatives, such as the California Permanency for Youth Project, Older Youth Adoption Project and recent cross-system child welfare improvement efforts such as the NGA Policy Academy on Youth Transitioning from Foster Care, California Child Welfare Council, Blue Ribbon Commission on Foster Care, and state and local program improvement plans.

With our rich landscape of opportunities, California is at a pivotal point to identify and sustain valued practices and priceless investments in the permanency and well-being of our state's foster children. During 2008 an ad hoc workgroup of the California Co-Investment Partnership worked together on a statewide approach to permanency sustainability in California. The recommended approach includes the following strategies for implementing and sustaining statewide system improvements in the area of permanency:

- Establish statewide cross-system leadership for change;
- Leverage funding to support expanded permanency efforts; and
- Develop training and technical assistance capacity to support implementation of a statewide permanency framework.

This approach to permanency sustainability is a broad vision that will depend on the coordinated efforts of many systems, organizations and leaders over time. To support movement toward such a statewide approach, during 2009 the Co-Investment Partnership will utilize public education strategies to increase awareness of the value of permanency for foster children and youth and to highlight data, information and key messages in order to build cross-system leadership, alignment and resources for this coordinated statewide approach.

The public education strategy for permanency sustainability in California is consistent with the Partnership's broader public education and outreach plan. Audiences to be reached through these efforts include key leaders and decision-makers across systems and other stakeholders.



### **Public Education Goals**

Increase understanding of the importance of love and belonging in the lives of children and the urgent need to create and sustain permanent connections for all foster children.

Spur local and state awareness of the opportunities for coordinated cross-system leadership, resources and investments to improve permanency outcomes overall for children in care.

Build support for and communicate urgency regarding the implementation of key leadership, training and fiscal strategies of the Partnership's Statewide Approach to Permanency Sustainability.

### **Key Messages**

Separate key messages document titled "Permanency: A Lifetime of Love, Belonging and Family Connection" is attached.

### **Messengers**

Messengers will be matched with audience and messaging opportunities, optimizing use of peer-to-peer messengers within existing conferences, forums and networks. Messengers include:

Statewide system improvement forums (Permanency Committee for CWC, Blue Ribbon Commission, Co-Investment Partnership, California Permanency for Youth Project, etc.)

Statewide advocates (California Youth Connection, California CASA, Youth Law Center, Legal Advocates for Permanent Parenting, etc.)

Representatives from social services, child welfare, courts, and community-based organizations who champion permanency

Representatives of state and regional child welfare and mental health training organizations and consortiums who champion permanency

### **Target Audiences**

**Primary target audience is state and local cross-system leaders and decision-makers, including:**

- Administration – Governor, senior program/policymaking officials and staff at the Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Social Services and Department of Finance;
- Legislature – Assembly Select Committee on Foster Care members and staff, Assembly and Senate budget members and staff, Assembly and Senate key policy committee members and staff;



- The California Child Welfare Council and its members and committees;
- Members of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Foster Care and all local implementing Commissions;
- The State Interagency Team;
- State and regional child welfare training organizations and consortiums, including CalSWEC, STEC, regional training academies and regional consortiums.
- County leaders, decision-makers and administrators – County boards of supervisors and executives, county welfare and child welfare directors, mental health directors, and senior program, policy and fiscal staff;
- Courts – The AOC/Judicial Council, local court officials and executives;

**Secondary target audiences are advocates, stakeholders, foundations, public, business and community leaders, and the faith-based community, including but not limited to:**

- Statewide Associations – County Welfare Directors Association, SEIU, California Association of Social Workers – California, California Alliance for Services For Children, County Mental Health Directors Association, State Foster Parent Association.
- Statewide Advocates – California Youth Connection, California Center for Youth Law, California Youth Connection, Children’s Law Center of LA, California CASA, Youth Law Center.
- Community/Business and Philanthropy, including the John Burton Foundation.
- Faith-based community.

#### **Public Education Strategies**

Public education activities will focus on communicating our messages in a variety of venues with a variety of messengers, some of which will be aimed at securing media attention, but will also focus on outreach to the stakeholder community optimizing peer-to-peer strategies. Activities and strategies will be developed and coordinated with our stakeholder partners to maximize impact and to increase dissemination to targeted audiences.

Messaging will focus on the importance of enduring relationships for foster children and youth, the role of federal, state and local leaders and decision makers in making that a reality in the lives of foster youth,



and the priceless “return on investment” that comes with implementation of effective permanency practices.

Strategies include the following:

- Re-brand the concept of Permanency using a tag line or other strategies so it’s meaning in our materials is clear and communicates the essence of relational permanency.
- Work to remove the word “Court” from “California Court Adoption and Permanency Month.” Consider a media campaign to inform the community about California Adoptions and Permanency month.
- Develop and agree upon a common set of permanency messages and coordinate and align with key messages and priorities of related efforts, such as NGA, the Foster Care Month Steering Committee, the Child Welfare Council, Blue Ribbon Commission, and Program Improvement Plan. Use key messages in all written materials and outreach with an accurate and consistent voice.
- Produce concise written materials with key facts and themes including Insights Publication, one-pager for Information Kit and press release for California Court Adoption and Permanency Month.
- Work collaboratively with partner organizations to implement an art/poetry contest for current/former foster children and youth with a permanency theme, pair key permanency messages with art contest submissions in a 2010 calendar format and maximize calendar dissemination during November/December 2009 and early 2010 to cross-system leaders and practitioners, including at key convenings and trainings.
- Utilize existing and identify new opportunities to highlight and deliver messages, e.g., work with Casey Family Programs and the steering committee on Adoption and Permanency month, identify statewide conferences, press conferences and other forums to provide key messages, consider development of a “how to” press packets for Statewide Associations or local BRCs regarding permanency outreach to local media during Adoption month (consider Dave Thomas and NACAC press packets).
- Target select audiences and match messengers with audience based on optimal impact to population and/or statewide coverage.
- Utilize (and support) key stakeholders and other designated spokespeople who will deliver consistent policy and fiscal messages to target audiences.





- Help target audiences understand the personal and fiscal benefits of promoting permanency through identification of personal and professional stories based on experiences and achievements related to permanency. Work with CYC, the CWDA Public Awareness and Education Committee, and other key stakeholders.
- Secure editorial support through submission of guest op-eds.
- Work with other stakeholder groups, including AOC, BRC and Foster Care Month Steering Committee, to coordinate and leverage their public education activities and media strategies related to permanency.

#### **Media Targets**

- Sacramento Bee
- Child welfare/court reporters at other major daily newspapers (Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles Daily News, San Francisco Chronicle, Oakland Tribune, San Jose Mercury News, Contra Costa Times, San Diego Union-Tribune, Fresno Bee, Modesto Bee, Bakersfield Californian)
- Legal press – Daily Journal and other legal publications
- Capitol Press Corps
- Policy and political blogs visited by Capitol staffers and others
- Sacramento area radio and television stations (for Sacramento-focused events)
- New media (Youtube, My Space, Facebook, writer/bloggers who can create a buzz, etc.)

#### **Activities**

The following summarize activities proposed for leaders and key decision-makers, stakeholders, and press, recognizing that there is overlap among the three categories. Once activities are agreed upon, task lists and timelines will be developed for the work that needs to be done.

##### **Leader and Key Decision-maker Outreach**

- Disseminate Insights Publication to target audience
- Identify local and statewide opportunities (i.e. conferences, meetings and other forums) and pair with key messengers, leveraging partnerships and peer-to-peer relationships (such as judges



presenting at Beyond the Bench, Permanency Committee presentation to the Child Welfare Council; AOC presentation to local implementing Blue Ribbon Commissions).

#### **Stakeholder Outreach**

- Webinar with stakeholders to provide message training and/or “how to” press packets to use locally
- Identify stakeholder conferences, meetings and events where key messengers can conduct outreach and disseminate public education materials
- Utilize California Court Adoption and Permanency Month and Foster Care Month to promote understanding of the importance of enduring relationships and build support for accelerated permanency practices.

#### **Press Outreach**

- Leverage California Court Adoption and Permanency Month by highlighting stories and experiences of key professionals to build understanding and support for permanency policies and practices.
- Organize a press conference in Sacramento during California Court Adoption and Permanency Month to release Insights Publication on Permanency.
- Undertake an op/ed strategy to “push out” messages during California Court Adoption and Permanency Month.

#### **Tools and Resources**

- Key messages to guide development of written materials, Insights, one –pager, op/eds and press release.
- Talking points for key professional spokespersons and others who will be peer messengers.
- Short written summaries of personal and professional “stories” from key messengers (ie social workers, judges, child welfare directors, youth).
- Press conference media advisory.
- Guest op/eds and articles.
- Press packet.



- Press release.
- Press release template for county use.
- Proclamation (state)
- Proclamation template/suggestions (county)
- Consider legislative display case materials for California Court Adoption and Permanency Month



## BACKGROUND

### CALIFORNIA COURT ADOPTION AND PERMANENCY MONTH

November 2008

PROCLAMATION by the Governor of the State of California

All of California's children deserve a happy and stable home life. The love a family provides helps our youth become successful adults. Parents also serve as role models for their kids and play a crucial role in helping them make smart choices as they grow. However, sometimes a child's biological parents are unable to care for them, and as a result, many caring foster and adoptive parents step up and take on that role, ensuring that our young people receive the love and guidance they need.

Many people in our state work tirelessly to help find homes for children who cannot return to their biological parents, and I applaud their outstanding efforts. My gratitude also goes to our state's foster parents who open their hearts to support children in need. Their kindness nurtures these kids and gives them the opportunity to build bright futures.

This month, we join together to recognize the great contributions that foster and adoptive parents make in our Golden State, as well as remind ourselves that there is still a need for many permanent homes for California children in foster care. I thank all those who work to give our youth safe and healthy homes.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER**, Governor of the State of California, do hereby proclaim November 2008, as "California Court Adoption and Permanency Month."